

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 184549

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NE

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH B.P. KOIRALA

1. FORMER PRIME MINISTER B.P. KOIRALA CALLED ON DEPARTMENT AUGUST 5 AT HIS REQUEST, MEETING WITH WORKING LEVEL NEA/INS AND D/HA OFFICERS. ACCOMPANIED BY TWO NEPALESE COMPATRIOTS KOIRALA WAS RELAXED AND LOW-KEY. HIS VOICE WAS LOW AND WEAK AND HE EXPLAINED THATALTHOUGH HE RETURNS TO KATHMANDU IN LATE SEPTEMBER; HIS DOCTORS IN NEW YORK WANT HIM TO RETURN NEXT YEAR FOR OBSERVATION AND TESTS.

2. KOIRALA GAVE A RAMBLING ACCOUNT OF HIS RETURN TO NEPAL LAST DECEMBER AND THE KING'S DECISION TO PERMIT HIS RELEASE FROM PRISON FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT IN THE U.S. KOIRALA STATED THAT HE RETURNED TO KATHMANDU BECAUSE OF RISING GOI
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HARRASSMENT AND HIS CONVICTION THAT HE WOULD ADD TO HIS CREDIBILITY BY BEING WITHIN AND NOT OUTSIDE NEPAL.

3. HE ATTRIBUTED HIS RELEASE FROM JAIL TO SEVERAL FACTORS, ESPECIALLY THE POLITICAL CHANGE IN INDIA AND THE U.S. STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS. HE SAID THAT THE DAY PRIOR TO HIS DEPART- URE HE WAS SUMMONED BY BIRENDRA WHO OFFERED TO DROP ALL

CHARGES AGAINST HIM IN RETURN FOR HIS SUPPORT OF THE PANCHAYAT SYSTEM. WHEN HE REFUSED, THE KING WARNED THAT HE WOULD FACE THE CONSEQUENCES ON HIS RETURN TO NEPAL. KOIRALA CONCEDED THAT HE FACES A RENEWED TRIAL WHEN HE RETURNS BUT IMPLIED THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE HELD. HE STRESSED INSTEAD HIS "WORKING ASSUMPTION" THAT THE KING'S DECISION TO RELEASE HIM MEANS THAT BIRENDRA WISHES TO OPEN SOME FORM OF DIALOGUE. KOIRALA AVOWED HIS INTEREST IN ARRIVING AT A COMPROMISE WITH THE KING AND CLAIMED THAT HE HAS NOT WAVERED FROM HIS CONVICTION THAT THERE IS ROOM IN NEPAL FOR BOTH THE MONARCHY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. HE DISMISSED THE PROSPECT OF ANY MEANINGFUL CHANGE EMERGING FROM THE PANCHAYAT COMMISSION SAYING THAT THE KING HAD ALREADY MADE UP HIS MIND WHAT CHANGES MIGHT BE INTRODUCED INTO THE PRESENT SYSTEM.

4. KOIRALA WAS UNCERTAIN ABOUT INDIAN INTENTIONS TOWARD NEPAL'S STATUS AS "ODD MAN OUT" IN SOUTH ASIA. HE SAW ONLY J.P. NARAYAN ON HIS WAY TO THE U.S., BUT HE SAID HE WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE IN DEPTH THE JANATA GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDES TOWARD NEPAL NEXT MONTH. KOIRALA DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS INDIA'S BEST FRIEND IN NEPAL, BUT SAID THE INDIANS SHOULD ALLOW NEPAL ITS FREEDOM AND TO REFRAIN FROM THEIR NORMAL "EXAGGERATED INTEREST" IN NEPALESE AFFAIRS.

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5. WITH REGARD TO THE U.S. ROLE, KOIRALA STATED THAT WE HAD GREAT INFLUENCE WITH THE KING AND THOUGHT OUR VIEWS COULD AFFECT HIS STANCE IN RESPONDING TO PRESSURES FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE. HE URGED US TO USE OUR INFLUENCE WHILE DISAVOWING ANY DESIRE FOR U.S. SUPPORT FOR HIMSELF PERSONALLY. WE RESPONDED THAT THE U.S. POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY WAS WELL KNOWN TO ALL GOVERNMENTS AND THAT WE FELT CONFIDENT THAT THE GON WAS FAMILIAR WITH OUR POSITION.

6. AS NOTED IN REFTTEL WE INTEND TO INFORM THE NEPALESE EMBASSY OF OUR MEETING WITH KOIRALA. FOLLOWING IS THE LINE WE PLAN TO TAKE WITH THE EMBASSY ON AUGUST 8 FROM WHICH YOU MAY WISH TO DRAW IF QUERIED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OR IF YOU DECIDE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE.

7. WE WILL SAY THAT WE WISH THE EMBASSY TO KNOW OF OUR CONVERSATION WITH KOIRALA, AT WHICH WERE PRESENT OFFICERS OF THE DESK AND D/HA, WITH COUNTRY DIRECTOR KUX THE RANKING OFFICIAL. WE WILL STATE THAT KOIRALA PRESENTED HIS VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN NEPAL (WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIC). WE LISTENED AND REVIEWED THE WELL-KNOWN POSITION

OF THE USG ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN A GENERAL WAY NOTING THAT
THESE VIEWS HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO THE GON AS WELL AS TO ALL
OTHER GOVERNMENTS WITH WHICH WE MAINTAIN RELATIONS.

8. IF ASKED BY THE PRESS, WE INTEND TO SAY THAT IN
RESPONSE TO A REQUEST BY MR. KOIRALA, AND IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE ADMINISTRATION'S OPEN-DOOR POLICY ON MATTERS SUCH
AS THIS, HE MET WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AT THE WORKING
LEVEL CONCERNED WITH SOUTH ASIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS.
CHRISTOPHER

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